

13 April 2018



The "Skip A Meal Fundraising Campaign" of the winner of the UNV Online Volunteering Award 2017, Simuka African Youth Association, which was ably supported by UN Online Volunteer Bianca Dayrit (the Philippines).

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And the winner is: Simuka Africa Youth Association, Zimbabwe

The public has cast its vote and the UN Online Volunteering Award 2017 goes to the Simuka Africa Youth Association Team. Working to alleviate poverty in the communities of Norton, Zimbabwe, the organization engaged UN Online Volunteer Bianca Dayrit (the Philippines), Publishing Specialist for Thomson Reuters, to lead a campaign for the abolition of child marriage and raise funds to assist vulnerable girls and households with food, education and mentorship for over 700 people.

Simuka Africa Youth Association was established in 2006 in response to the growing number of challenges that were affecting young people in Zimbabwe. It was during the time when the country was in the midst of political and socioeconomic turmoil, characterised by high youth unemployment, a high HIV and AIDS prevalence rate of 20.1 per cent among those aged 15-49, a historic hyperinflation, declining health educational services among other social and economic ills.

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“ I decided to volunteer for this organization in particular because Simuka Africa Youth Association’s causes of ending child marriage and empowering youth through education hit close to home. I believe in their vision of eventually eradicating poverty by providing better opportunities for underprivileged youth. --Bianca Dayrit, UN Online Volunteer

During 2017, the organization was spearheading a “Skip A Meal Fundraising Campaign”, aimed at raising financial, technical and material resources to assist girls and young women at risk and survivors of child marriages in Zimbabwe, HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence, physical and emotional harm and exploitation. The organization was looking for passionate experts in social media fundraising and campaign management to advise its Social Media Fundraising Team.

“ Bianca is a passionate, creative and highly committed volunteer who provided capacity building, mentoring and coaching for our Social Media Fundraising Team. This involved advising the team on effective and supportive platforms to use, assisting with editing and packaging information for posting on the social media and helping to drive engagement, traffic and interest across social media as well as outlining strategies for social media engagements. --Simuka Africa Youth Association

Through the online collaboration, Bianca increased the capacity of the organization and that of the campaign team to conduct and manage social media fundraising campaigns. She also helped to instil a culture of volunteerism in the organization’s Executive Board and among staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. There is now an increased appreciation on the role of volunteerism to development within the organization.

"Following the implementation of advice given by Bianca to the Social Media Fundraising Team, Simuka Africa Youth Association experienced a sharp increase of more than 100 per cent in followers and likes on their social media platforms," Simuka Africa Youth Association attested in their nomination to the Online Volunteering Award 2017.

"This resulted in increased donations in cash and kind from individual well-wishers and organisations, which enabled the organization to assist more than 700 poor and food insecure households with monthly supply of food and other basic commodities, as well to

help communities to establish community gardens. Girls and young women at risk and survivors of child marriages benefited from educational support, food, economic strengthening and sexual reproductive health education and services."

Simuka African Youth Association also gained increased recognition, visibility and credibility among UN, Government and other partners in the area of girls and women empowerment. The organization has been requested to share its best practices at different fora and its collaboration with UN Online Volunteers was cited as an exemplary best practice during the 2017 International Volunteers Day commemoration held in Harare.

“ Online volunteering has given me a better perspective as a millennial mom. Spreading values that matter most can influence not just the local community, but the entire global population. This is the kind of mindset I would like to teach my son when he’s old enough. --Bianca Dayrit, UN Online Volunteer

Your organization can also mobilize online volunteer support to accelerate your delivery. Check out the [UNV Online Volunteering service](#).

Global

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 5: Gender equality](#)